[*OC* II, *1262*]

Discourse on this Question:

What is the Virtue a Hero Most Needs and Who are the Heroes who have Lacked this Virtue?

Proposed in 1751 by the Academy of Corsica

Notice

[1] This Piece is very bad, and I was so sensitive to its being bad after I wrote it that I did not even think it worth submitting. It is easy to do less badly on this subject, but not to do well; for frivolous questions do not admit of a good answer. That is at least one useful lesson to derive from a bad [piece of] writing.

[2] If I were not *Alexander*, said that Conqueror, I would want to be *Diogenes*. Would the Philosopher have said: If I were not what I am, I would want to be *Alexander*? I doubt it; A Conqueror would sooner consent to be a Wise Man than a Wise Man to be a Conqueror. But who in the world, except a Wise Man, would not agree to be Hero? One does, then, sense that Heroism has its own virtues, which do not depend on fortune, but need it in order to develop. The Hero is the work of nature, fortune, and himself. In order to define him well, one would have specify what he owes to each of the three.

[3] The Wise Man possesses all the virtues. The Hero [*1263*] makes up for the virtues he lacks by the splendor of those he possesses. The virtues of the first are tempered, but he is free of vices; if the second has flaws, they are eclipsed by the splendor of his virtues. The one, ever true, has no bad qualities; the other, ever great, has none that are mediocre. Both are firm and unshakable, but in different ways and about different things; the one never yields except by reason; the other never yields except out of generosity; weaknesses are as unknown to the Wise Man as cowardices

are to the Hero, and violence holds no more sway in the soul of the one than the passions do in the other's.

[4] There is, then, greater solidity in the Wise Man's character, and greater splendor in the Hero's; and the choice would be settled in favor of the first, if one left it at thus considering them in themselves. But if we consider them in their relation to the interest of Society, new reflections will soon produce different judgments and restore the Heroic qualities to the preeminence that is due them, and that, by common consent, has been granted them in all centuries.

[5] Indeed, attending to his own felicity is the Wise Man's sole care, and that is surely quite enough to constitute an ordinary man's full task. The true Hero's views reach farther; his object is the happiness of men, and it is to this sublime labor that he devotes the great soul he has received from Heaven. The Philosophers do, I admit, claim to teach men the art of being happy and, as if they could expect to form nations of Wise Men, they preach to Peoples a chimerical felicity which they themselves do not possess, and the idea and taste for which Peoples never acquire. *Socrates* saw and deplored the misfortunes of his fatherland; but it remained for *Thrasybulus* to end them; and *Plato*, after wasting his eloquence, his honor and his time at a Tyrant's court, was compelled to relinquish to another the glory of delivering Syracuse from the yoke of tyranny. The Philosopher may give the Universe some salutary instructions; but his lessons will not ever correct either the Great who despise them, or the People which does not understand them. This is not the way men are governed[,] by abstract views; they are only made happy by being constrained to be so, and they have to be made to experience happiness in order [*1264*] to be made to love it: this is [the object of] the Hero's care and talents; often it is with force in hand that he puts himself in the position of receiving the Blessings of men whom he begins by compelling to bear the yoke of the laws so that he might eventually subject them to the authority of reason.

[6] Heroism is then the one of all the properties of the soul of which it most matters to Peoples that those who govern them be possessed. It is the combination of a great number of sublime virtues, rare in their association, rarer in their energy, and all the rarer still because the Heroism which [together] they make up, free of

all personal interest, has people's felicity as its sole object, and their admiration as its sole reward.

[7] I have said nothing here of the legitimate glory owed to great deeds; I have not spoken of the force of genius or of the other personal qualities Heroes need, and which, without being virtues, often contribute more than do virtues to the success of great enterprises. In assigning his rank to the true Hero, I have relied solely on this unchallengeable principle: that among men he who makes himself most useful to others should be the foremost. I have no fear that the Wise will appeal a decision based on this maxim.

[8] It is true, I hasten to admit it, that this way of viewing Heroism gives rise to an objection that seems all the more difficult to resolve as it is derived from the very heart of the matter.

[9] There is no need of two Suns in nature, the Ancients used to say, nor of two *Caesars* on earth. Indeed, Heroism is like those sought-after metals that are valuable for being rare, and would become harmful or useless if they were abundant. The man whose valor pacified the World would have laid it waste if he had found in it a single rival worthy of him. Under certain circumstances a Hero may be needed to save mankind; a people of Heroes would inevitably be its ruin under any circumstances, and, like the Soldiers of *Cadmus*, it would soon destroy itself.

[10] Go on, I will be told, can multiplying mankind's benefactors be a danger to men, and can there be too many people working for the happiness of all? Yes, indeed, I shall answer, when they go about it badly, or only appear to attend to it. [*1265*] Let us not hide anything from ourselves; the public felicity is far less the end of the Hero's deeds than it is a means to the end he seeks, and this end is almost always his personal glory. Love of glory has made for innumerable goods and evils; love of Fatherland is purer in its principle and surer in its effects; and indeed, the World has often had a surfeit of Heroes; but the nations will never have enough citizens. There is a considerable difference between the man who is virtuous and the one who has virtues; the source of the Hero's virtues is rarely purity of soul and, like those beneficial but comparatively inert drugs that have to be activated by acrid and corrosive salts, they would seem to need the assistance of some vice to animate them.

[11] One should therefore conceive of Heroism not in terms of an idea of moral perfection which in no way corresponds to it, but as

a composite of good and bad qualities that are beneficial or harmful depending on circumstances, and combined in a proportion such as often to result in greater fortune and glory for him who possesses them, and sometimes even in more happiness for the Peoples, than could a more perfect virtue.

[12] From these notions properly developed it follows that quite a few virtues may be at odds with Heroism; that others are indifferent with respect to it; that others are more or less favorable to it, according to their different relations to the great art of subduing the hearts and arousing the admiration of Peoples; and finally that among these latter there has to be one that is more necessary, more essential, more indispensable to it, and that in some way characterizes it: it is this special and properly Heroic virtue that should here be the object of my inquiries.

[13] Nothing is as categorical as ignorance, and doubt is as rare among the People as assertion is among true Philosophers. Vulgar prejudice long ago decided the question we are discussing today, and most men have long taken valor in war to be the Hero's foremost virtue. Let us dare to appeal this blind judgment to the Court of reason, and may prejudices, so often the enemies and conquerors of reason, learn to yield to it in turn.

[14] Let us not reject the first reflection which this subject occasions, and let us begin by conceding that Peoples have [*1266*] rather thoughtlessly bestowed their esteem and adulation on martial prowess, or that with a rather odious inconsistency they believe that it is by destroying men that the benefactors of mankind manifest their character. We are pretty inept as well as pretty wretched, if our admiration can only be aroused by causing us distress. Are we to believe, then, that if ever the days of happiness and peace were to be reborn among us, they would banish from our midst both Heroism and the frightful train of public calamities, and that Heroes would be relegated to the Temple of *Janus*, as, after a war, antiquated and useless weapons are stored away in our Arsenals.

[15] I know that courage counts for something among the qualities that ought to form a great man; but outside combat, valor is nothing. The courageous man proves himself only on days of battle; the true Hero proves himself every day, and his virtues, even if they are sometimes displayed with pomp, are no less often useful under a more modest exterior.

as well as the other. Is it likely that it is for want of modern examples that I have cited only ancient ones here?

[19] Let it, therefore, no longer be said that the palm of Heroism belongs only to valor and the military talents. It is not by their exploits that the reputation of great men is measured. The vanquished have carried off the reward of glory a hundred times more often than have the victors. Take a vote and tell me which of the two is greater, *Alexander* or *Porus*, *Pyrrhus* or *Fabricius*, *Antony* or *Brutus*; *Francis I* in chains or *Charles V* triumphant, *Valois* victorious or *Coligny* vanquished?

[20] What are we to say about the great men who are all the more surely immortal for not having soiled their hands with blood? What are we to say about the Lawgiver of Sparta who, after tasting the pleasure of ruling, had the courage to return the crown to its legitimate possessor who was not asking him for it; about the gentle and peaceful Citizen who was able to avenge the injuries done him not by the offender's death, but by turning him into an honest man? Are we to reject the oracle that granted him almost [*1268*] divine honors, and deny Heroism to the man who made Heroes of all his compatriots? What are we to say about the Lawgiver of Athens who was able to keep his freedom and virtue at the very Court of tyrants, and dared maintain to the face of an opulent Monarch that power and riches do not make a man happy? What are we to say of the greatest of Romans and the most virtuous of men, about this model among citizens to whom alone the oppressor of the Fatherland did the honor to hate him enough to take up the pen against him, even after his death? Shall we so affront Heroism as to deny it to *Cato Uticensis*? And yet this man did not distinguish himself in battles and did not fill the world with the clamor of his exploits. I am mistaken: he did perform one, the most difficult one ever undertaken, and the only one that will never be imitated, when of a body of warriors he formed a society of wise, equitable and moderate men.

[21] It is well enough known that valor was not *Augustus*'s lot. He did not gather the laurels that made him immortal off the coast of Actium or on the plains of Philippi, but in Rome pacified and made happy. A subdued Universe did less for the glory and security of his life than did the equity of his laws and the pardon of *Cinna*: that is how much preferable the social virtues are even in Heroes!

The greatest Captain in the world dies assassinated in the middle of the Senate for a bit of injudicious haughtiness, for having wished to add a vain title to real power; and the odious author of the proscriptions, eradicating his crimes by dint of justice and clemency, became the father of his Fatherland which he had devastated, and dies adored by the Romans he had enslaved.

[22] Who among us will dare deprive all these great men of the Hero's crown adorning their immortal heads? Who will dare refuse it to the Philosophic and beneficent warrior who with a hand accustomed to handling arms deflects from your breast the calamities of a long and deadly war, and makes the sciences and the fine arts shine among you with Royal magnificence? O Spectacle worthy of the Heroic times! I see the Muses in all their splendor march in your battalions with confident stride, Apollo and Mars crown each other, and your Island still smoldering from the ravages of the lightning henceforth defy its bolts sheltered by these [*1269*] double laurels. Judge, then, illustrious Citizens, who deserves the palm of Heroism more, the Warriors who rushed to your defense, or the Wise Men who do everything for your happiness; or rather, spare yourselves an unnecessary choice, for by this double criterion you will only have the same brows to crown.

[23] To the examples which come crowding in and which it is impossible to exhaust let us add a few reflections that confirm the inferences I wish to draw from them here. To assign to valor the foremost rank in the Heroic character would be to give precedence to the arm that executes over the head that plans. Yet arms are more readily available than heads. One can entrust the execution of a great plan to others without losing the principal merit for it; but to execute another's plan is voluntarily to resume the subordinate rank, and that is not the Hero's part.

[24] Thus, whatever may be the virtue that characterizes him, it must signal genius and be inseparable from it. While the seed of the Heroic qualities does, indeed, come from the heart, it is in the head that they develop and assume solidity. The purest soul can stray even on the road to good, if mind and reason do not guide it, and without the assistance of wisdom, all the virtues get corrupted. Firmness readily degenerates into stubbornness, gentleness into weakness, zeal into fanaticism, valor into ferocity. Often a great enterprise poorly planned does more harm to the one who bungles

it than a deserved success would have brought him honor; for contempt is commonly stronger than esteem. It would even seem that, in establishing a resplendent reputation, talents make up for virtues much more readily than virtues do for talents. The Soldier of the North, with narrow genius and limitless courage had, by the middle of his career, irretrievably lost a glory acquired by prodigious feats of valor and generosity; and public opinion is still in doubt about whether the murderer of *Charles Stuart* is not, for all of his crimes, one of the greatest men ever to have existed.

[25] Bravery does not constitute a character but, on the contrary, it derives its particular form from the character of the person who possesses it. It is a virtue in a virtuous soul and a vice in a wicked man. The knight *Bayard* was brave; so was *Cartouche*: but is anyone likely to believe [*1270*] that they were so the same way? Valor admits of all forms; it is generous or brutal, stupid or enlightened, raging or tranquil, depending on the soul that possesses it; depending on circumstances, it is the sword of vice or the shield of virtue; and since it does not necessarily signal either greatness of soul or of mind, it is not the virtue a Hero most needs. Pardon me for it, valiant and unfortunate People that has for so long filled Europe with the clamor of your exploits and your miseries. No, it is not to the bravery of those of your Fellow-Citizens who spilled their blood for their country that I shall award the Hero's Crown, but to their ardent love of Fatherland and to their invincible steadfastness in the face of adversity. For being Heroes with such sentiments, they could even have dispensed with being brave.

[26] I have attacked a dangerous and too widely held opinion; I have not the same reasons for following the method of exclusions in all of its details. All the virtues arise from the different relations Society has established between men. Now the number of these relations is almost infinite. What a task would it therefore be to set out to review them? It would be immense, since there are among men as many possible virtues as there are real vices; it would be superfluous, since, among the number of great and difficult virtues the Hero needs in order to command well, one cannot include as necessary the large number of even more difficult virtues the multitude needs in order to obey. Someone shone brilliantly in the first rank who, if he had been born in the last, would have died obscure and unnoticed. I do not know what would have happened to *Epic-*

tetus, if he had been placed upon the throne of the world; but I do know that in *Epictetus*'s place, *Caesar* himself would never have been anything but a paltry slave.

[27] For the sake of brevity, let us therefore restrict ourselves to the divisions established by the Philosophers, and leave it at reviewing the four principal virtues to which they relate all the others, quite confident that one should not look for the basis of Heroism in ancillary, obscure and subordinate qualities.

[28] But are we to say that justice is this basis, when the majority of great men have founded the monument to their glory on injustice? Some, drunk [*1271*] with the love of Fatherland, have found nothing to be illegitimate in its service and have not hesitated to use on its behalf odious means which their generous souls could never have resolved to use on their own behalf; others, consumed by ambition, labored solely to put their country in chains; a fierce desire for vengeance has led others to betray it. Some have been rapacious conquerors, others skillful usurpers, still others were not even ashamed to become the Ministers of someone else's tyranny. Some have scorned their duty, others have made light of their faith. A few have been unjust out of [adherence to] some system, others out of weakness, most out of ambition: all attained immortality.

[29] Justice is then not the virtue that characterizes the Hero. It seems no more accurate to say that it is temperance or moderation since it is for want of this latter virtue that the most famous men made themselves immortal, and the vice that is the opposite of the former virtue has not kept a single one of them from becoming immortal; not even *Alexander*, whom this frightful vice covered with his friend's blood; not even *Caesar*, whom all of his profligacies during his life did not deprive of a single altar after his death.

[30] Prudence is a quality of the mind rather than a virtue of the soul. But, regardless of how one looks on it, one always finds it more solid than splendid, and it tends rather to enhance the other virtues than to shine on its own. Prudence, says Montaigne, so tender and circumspect, is the mortal enemy of lofty enterprises and of any genuinely heroic deed: while it prevents great mistakes, it also hinders great undertakings; for there are but few great undertakings that do not in the end require leaving far more to chance than it is appropriate for a wise man to leave to it. Besides, the character of Heroism consists in raising to the highest pitch the

virtues that are properly its own. Yet nothing comes so close to pusillanimity as excessive prudence, and one scarcely rises above man without sometimes trampling human reason underfoot. Prudence is then still not the characteristic virtue of the Hero.

[31] Temperance is still less so, [as it is the virtue] which Heroism itself, which is nothing but an intemperance of glory, appears formally to exclude. Where are the Heroes who have not been degraded by excesses of some kind? Alexander, it is said, was [*1272*] chaste; but was he sober? Did not this rival of India's first conqueror imitate his profligacies? did he not combine them, when at the prompting of a Courtesan he burned down the Palace at Persepolis? O, had he but had a Mistress! He would not have killed his friend during his fatal debauchery. Caesar was sober, but was he chaste, he who exposed Rome to unheard of prostitution and changed sex at pleasure? Alcibiades had every sort of intemperance and was nonetheless one of the great men of Greece. Even the elder Cato himself loved money and wine. He had abject vices and was the object of the Romans' admiration. And that People knew about glory.

[32] The virtuous man is just, prudent, moderate, without being a Hero for all that, and all too frequently the Hero is none of all that. Let us not hesitate to concede it; often Heroism has owed its splendor to its very contempt for these virtues. What becomes of *Caesar*, *Alexander*, *Pyrrhus*, *Hannibal*, viewed in this light? With somewhat fewer vices they might well have been less famous; for glory is the reward of Heroism; whereas virtue requires a different reward.

[33] If the virtues had to be distributed to those they suit best, I would assign prudence to the Statesman; justice to the Citizen; moderation to the Philosopher; as for strength of soul or fortitude, I would give it to the Hero, and he would have no cause to complain of his share.

[34] Indeed, fortitude is the true foundation of Heroism; it is the source or the supplement of the virtues that compose it, and it is what renders it fit for great things. Combine any way you please the qualities that can contribute to forming a great man, if you do not add fortitude to enliven them, they all grow listless and Heroism vanishes. By contrast, force of soul or fortitude alone necessarily

bestows a great many Heroic virtues to anyone endowed with it, and it makes up for all the others.

[35] Just as one can perform virtuous deeds without being virtuous, so one can perform great deeds without having a right to Heroism. The Hero is not forever performing great deeds; but he is ever ready to perform them in case of need and he shows himself great in all the circumstances of his life: that is what distinguishes him from the vulgar. An invalid may take up a spade and work the ground a few [*1273*] moments: but he is soon worn out and exhausted. A robust husbandman cannot stand great labors without respite, but he could stand them without straining, and he owes this power to his bodily force. Strength of soul or fortitude is the same thing; it consists in being able always to act forcefully.

[36] Men are more blind than wicked; and there is more weakness than malice in their vices. We deceive ourselves before deceiving others, and our faults are solely due to our errors; we almost only commit any because we allow ourselves to get caught up by petty present interests which make us forget more important and more remote things. Hence all the pettinesses that characterize the vulgar, inconstancy, frivolity, capriciousness, knavery, fanaticism, cruelty: all of them vices which have weakness of soul as their source. To the contrary, everything is great and generous in a strong or forceful soul, because it is capable of discriminating between the fine and the specious, reality and appearance, and of fastening on its object with the firmness that dispels illusions and overcomes the greatest obstacles.

[37] Thus an unstable judgment and an easily seduced heart render men weak and petty. To be great one need only assume mastery of oneself. Our most formidable enemies are within ourselves; and whoever will have succeeded in fighting and vanquishing them will, in the judgment of the Wise, have done more for glory than if he had conquered the Universe.

[38] This is what strength of soul or fortitude accomplishes; this is how it can enlighten the mind, expand genius and endow all the other virtues with energy and vigor; it can even make up for those we lack; for someone who might be neither courageous, nor just, nor wise, nor moderate by inclination, will yet be so by reason, as soon as having overcome his passions and vanquished his prejudices

he senses how much it redounds to his advantage to be so; as soon as he is convinced that he can realize his own happiness only by working for that of others. Fortitude is then the virtue which characterizes Heroism, and it is so as well by another irrefutable argument which I derive from the reflections of a great man: the other virtues, says *Bacon*, deliver us from the dominion of the vices; only fortitude secures us against the dominion of fortune. Indeed, what [*1274*] virtues are not in need of appropriate circumstances to set them to work? Of what use is justice with tyrants, prudence with the insane, temperance in misery? But all events honor a man of strength or fortitude, happiness and adversity contribute equally to his glory, and he rules no less in chains than on the Throne. Regulus's martyrdom in Carthage, Cato's feast upon being denied the Consulship, Epictetus's equanimity upon being crippled by his master, are no less illustrious than the triumphs of Alexander and of Caesar; and if Socrates had died in his bed, one might now wonder whether he was anything more than a skillful Sophist.

[39] Having ascertained the virtue which most properly belongs to the Hero, I should go on to speak of those who achieved Heroism without possessing it. But how could they have achieved it without the part which alone constitutes the true Hero and is essential to him? I have nothing to say to this, and that is the triumph of my cause. Among the celebrated men whose names are inscribed in the Temple of Glory, some have lacked wisdom, others moderation; some have been cruel, some unjust, some imprudent, some treacherous; all have had weaknesses; not one of them has been a weak man. In a word, some great men may have lacked all the other virtues; but there has never been a Hero without strength of soul or fortitude.

What is the Virtue a Hero Most Needs (pages 305–316)

Proposed in 1751. Rousseau misremembered the date: the subject was announced in the November 1750 issue of the *Mercure de France* (Pichois and Pintard, *Jean-Jacques entre Socrate et Caton*, p. 60, n. 9). The *Discourse* was first published in an unauthorized and defective version in Fréron's *L'Année Littéraire*, vol. VII, 1768. It was reprinted by various publishers the following year. The full, authoritative text was first published in the posthumous Du Peyrou-Moultou 1782 edition of Rousseau's *Works*. That is the version reproduced in *OC* II, 1262–1274, edited by Charly Guyot, and translated here.

[1] This brief prefatory "Notice" echoes sentiments Rousseau also expressed in several letters he wrote at the time of the first, unauthorized publications of this *Discourse*; see to Du Peyrou, 18 January 1769, to Henri Laliaud on the same date, and to his publisher M.-M. Rey, 31 January 1769 (*CC* XXXVII, 32f.; 33f.; 34–37).

[2] **If I were not *Alexander*, said that Conqueror, I would want to be *Diogenes***; quoting (without attribution) Bacon, *The Advancement*

of Learning, Book I (*The Works*, Popular Edition, based on the Complete Edition of Spedding, Ellis and Heath, New York, 1878; vol. I, pt. III, p. 155), based on Seneca, *De beneficiis* IV. In an earlier draft, Rousseau had gone on: "Socrates [*sic*] would not have said: if I were not what I am, I would like to be Alexander; there were reasons on the Monarch's side; there were no fewer on the Philosopher's. Which one of them should then have prevailed? Let us dare settle this great question; and before speaking of Heroism, let us try to situate it in the order of moral things. Short of this first step, how could we assign to it the virtues that suit it, and choose among them?" Indeed, throughout much of the present *Discourse* Rousseau is engaged in a discussion with Bacon's exploration of human good, and especially of "the diversity between a philosophical and a civil life" in Book II of the *Advancement*. Bacon's conclusion is summarized by Pufendorf in the context of his important discussion of "sociability": *Droit* II, 3, § XV.

[5] **Socrates . . . Thrasybulus** On Socrates under the ruthless rule of the Thirty Tyrants (404–403 BC); Xenophon, *Hellenica* II, 3 and 4, Xenophon, *Memorabilia* I, 30–39; Plato, *Apology of Socrates* 31d–33c; Socrates argues that he could and did do more good by leading a private rather than a public or political life. Thrasybulus, leader of the democratic party, was banished by the Thirty; with the help of the Thebans he restored the democracy in 403 BC: Xenophon, *Hellenica* II, 4. **and *Plato* . . . at a Tyrant's court** For Plato's account of his three trips to Syracuse – between 388 and 361 BC – in attempts to moderate first the tyranny of Dionysius the Elder, and then that of his son and successor Dionysius the Younger, see primarily his *Seventh Letter*. **was compelled to relinquish to another**, namely, to his friend and disciple, Dion, in 357 BC **the glory of delivering Syracuse from the yoke of tyranny**, as Aristotle reports him to have put it: *Politics*, V 10, 1312a 32–39; see Plutarch, *Dion*.

[9] **the soldiers of *Cadmus*** Cadmus slew a dragon and, on Athena's advice, sowed its teeth; from which grew up soldiers who slew each other until only five were left, who became the first Thebans.

[14] **the Temple of *Janus*** of *Janus Geminus*, in the Roman Forum; opened in time of war, and closed in time of peace.

[16] ***Catiline* . . . attempted to ruin his Fatherland** by conspiring against Rome; he displayed **the most unshakable fearlessness** in the battle Rome waged against his forces and in which he perished in early 62 BC; ***Cromwell* . . . enslaved his** upon dissolving Parliament in 1655 and becoming Lord Protector of England and Ireland; his **most unshakable fearlessness** was proverbial; Milton, his sometime secretary, spoke of his "matchless fortitude."

[17] Gaius ***Marius*** (*c.* 157–86 BC), highly successful and ruthless general, six times elected Consul of Rome, he was the first to allow anyone, regardless of status, to enlist in the Roman army, thus creating a professional volunteer army: cp. *Pol. Ec.* [55], *SC* IV 4 [18], *Poland* 12 [9]; in a coup in partnership with L. Cornelius Cinna (85 BC), he caused a bloodbath of the noblest of Rome's aristocracy; see Plutarch's *Life of Marius*. ***Totila*** King of the Ostrogoths, he took Rome in 546, and again in 550 when he engaged in a scorched earth policy; ***Tamerlane*** (1336–1405) founded the Second Mogul Empire; setting out from Samarkand in Central Asia, his conquests extended to Turkey in the West, and China in the East.

[18] ***Charles V*** or Charles Quint (1500–1558), initially (1516) Charles I, King of Spain and of her dependencies, Flanders, Austria, and Germany, he was elected Holy Roman Emperor (1516), assuming the name Charles V. He spent much of his forty-year reign engaged in often far-flung wars, but also with his neighbor, Francis I of France. ***Ajax*** the Greek hero second only to Achilles **terrifies** ***Hector*** the foremost Trojan hero: *Iliad* VII, 216f; ***Hector*** **terrifies** ***Ajax***, *Iliad* XI, 544–574; **and flees from** ***Achilles***: *Iliad* XXII, 136–253. ***Antiochus*** III, surnamed ***the Great*** (*c.* 242–187 BC), king of Syria, conquered or reconquered much of greater Syria and Palestine by 198; but when he crossed into Greece, he was twice defeated and humiliated by the Romans. **The conqueror of the three parts of the World** Pompey or Pompeius Magnus (108–48 BC) **lost his heart and head at Pharsala** in battle with Caesar in 48 BC. Gaius Julius ***Caesar*** (100–44 BC) **himself was moved at Dyrrhachium** (the modern Durazzo, on the Albanian coast) where he was forced to abandon the siege of Pompey's forces **and to retreat in early 48 BC and afraid at Munda**, in 45 BC, where his troops were in danger of being routed before they decisively defeated the sons of Pompey in what proved to be Caesar's last campaign. **The victor over** ***Brutus***, Marc Antony, at Philippi, in 42 BC, **cowardly fled** together with Cleopatra **from** ***Octavius*** (Octavian) Caesar who defeated his fleet off Actium in 32 BC.

[19] ***Alexander*** or ***Porus***: although Alexander defeated King Porus of India in 323 BC, his ". . . last battle against King Porus killed the Macedonians' hearts, and made them that they had no desire to go any farther to conquer India . . . [and] in the end he took pity of them, and was content to return": Plutarch, *Life of Alexander*, 62 (translated by North), cp. Arrian, *The Campaigns of Alexander*, V, 29; ***Pyrrhus*** or ***Fabricius***: Pyrrhus (319–272 BC), King of Epirus, a great warrior; he several times defeated Rome's armies, but Rome would not sue for peace; hence "Pyrrhic victory"; eventually Fabricius (see *First Discourse*

[32]) negotiated his withdrawal from Italy. ***Antony* or *Brutus*** the partisan of Caesar who offered him the Crown, or one of Caesar's executioners who, when he was defeated by Antony at Philippi in 42 BC, took his own life because he did not wish to survive the Republic. ***Francis I* in chains or *Charles V* triumphant** The forces of Francis I of France, besieging the garrison of Charles V of Spain in Pavia, were decisively defeated on 25 February 1525, and the King was taken prisoner and brought to Madrid where, under the circumstances, he agreed to the Treaty of Madrid (January 1526) by which he relinquished his claims to Milan, Naples, and Burgundy. Charles appeared to have definitely removed the only serious rival to his power. However, in order to implement the treaty, Francis had to be allowed to return to France, and as soon as he was back home, he revoked all the agreements and concessions he had made while a prisoner. Within the year, Charles's triumph had turned hollow. ***Valois* victorious or *Coligny* vanquished**: Admiral Gaspard de Coligny (1519–1572), a man of great valor, converted to Protestantism and became one of the chiefs of the Protestant party; he was one of the first victims of the Saint Bartholomew's Day massacre of Protestants on the night of 24 August 1572; the King, Charles IX of the House of Valois, was a somewhat reluctant party to the massacre, which had been plotted by his mother, Catherine de Medici (1519–1589), and Henri de Guise (1550–1588); he died soon after it (1574), racked by remorse. The Saint Bartholomew's Day massacre put an end to the Valois line, and religious peace was only restored in 1598, when Henry IV, the first of the House of Bourbon to accede to the throne of France, issued the Edict of Nantes, granting Protestants full religious, civil, and political rights. The Edict was revoked by Louis XIV in 1685. See, in this connection, Rousseau's discussion of the marriage of Protestants, in *SC* IV 8.

[20] **the Lawgiver of Sparta** Lycurgus **who . . . return[ed] the crown to its legitimate possessor** his nephew, Charilaus: Plutarch, *Lycurgus* III, 6, 9; **the gentle and peaceful Citizen** again Lycurgus **who was able to avenge the injuries done him** by Alcander **not by the offender's death, but by turning him into an honest man?** *ib.* 11. **the oraclen . . . that granted him almost divine honors** *ib.* 5.4 **the man who made Heroes of all his compatriots** i.e. still Lycurgus; **the Lawgiver of Athens,** Solon (*c.* 639–559 BC), **who was able to keep his freedom and virtue at the very Court of Tyrants** i.e. of Peisistratus: Plutarch, *Solon* XXXIX, 1–XXXI, 5 **and dared maintain to the face of an opulent Monarch,** i.e. Croesus, King of Lydia, **that power and riches do not make a man happy:** *ib.* XXVII, 1–XXVIII, 6, Herodotus, *Histories* I, 29–33. **the greatest of Romans**

and the most virtuous of men . . . this model among citizens Cato the Younger to whom alone the oppressor of the Fatherland Julius Caesar did the honor to hate him enough to take up the pen against him, even after his death? by publishing an *Anti-Cato*, Plutarch, *Caesar* LIV. 3–6 **of a body of warriors he formed a society of wise, equitable and moderate men** by his reform of Pompey's army: Plutarch, *Cato* LIII, 5–6; *Pompey* LXIII, 1.

[21] ***Augustus***. Octavian, or Augustus Caesar (63 BC–AD 14), Julius Caesar's great-nephew and adopted son, who became the first of the Roman Emperors and one on whom the Senate bestowed the title Augustus (in 27 BC). **He did not gather the laurels that made him immortal off the coast of Actium** where he defeated Antony and Cleopatra in 31 BC **or on the plains of Philippi** where together with Antony he defeated Brutus and Cassius in 42 BC, **but [by] . . . the equity of his laws and the pardon of** C. Cornelius *Cinna*, the great-grandson of Pompey, who had plotted against him: Seneca, *On Clemency* IX, retold by Montaigne, *Essays* XXIV (Montaigne, *OC* 123–125, tr. 91f.) and the central action of Corneille's tragedy *Cinna* (1643). **The greatest Captain in the world** Julius Caesar **dies assassinated in the middle of the Senate** on the ides of March, 44 BC **for having wished to add a vain title** namely "King" **to real power; and the odious author of the proscriptions** or list of enemies, which Octavian, later the Emperor Augustus, together with Antony and Lepidus, published at the beginning of their Triumvirate in 43 BC, and a result of which some 200 Equites and 300 Senators were murdered, **eradicating his crimes by dint of justice and clemency, became the father of his Fatherland which he had devastated, and dies adored by the Romans he had enslaved** by establishing the Empire in place of the Republic.

[22] **the Philosophic and beneficent warrior who . . . makes the sciences and the fine arts shine among you with Royal magnificence** The Marquis de Cursay, who pacified Corsica in 1748; the island was, at the time, a possession of Genoa, against which it had repeatedly risen in armed rebellion. The Genoese asked for help from their French allies, who sent in troops in 1738, and again in 1747 under de Cursay. It was he who also restored the Academy of the *Vagabondi* at Bastia in 1749. The present *Discourse* was written in response to a Prize Question proposed by that Academy. In the "Preface to *Narcissus*," which he wrote in the winter of 1752–1753, Rousseau speaks of the Bastia Academy as an instrument with which to subjugate the Corsicans: *Narcissus* [23]* with Editorial Note; Pichois and Pintard, *Jean-Jacques entre Socrate et Caton*, pp. 59–62. A decade later he wrote

in the *Social Contract*, "There is one country left in Europe capable of receiving legislation; it is the island of Corsica. The valor and steadfastness with which this brave people was able to recover and defend its freedom, would amply deserve that some wise man taught it to preserve it. I rather suspect that this small island will one day astound Europe" (*SC* II 10 [6]). This brief paragraph led to his being invited in 1764 to make proposals for the island's governance. He probably wrote his *Project of a Constitution for Corsica* in the following year. The first complete version was edited and published by Vaughan in 1915.
[24] **The Soldier of the North** probably Charles XII (1682–1718), King of Sweden (1697–1718), **with narrow genius and limitless courage had, by the middle of his career, irretrievably lost a glory acquired by prodigious feats of valor and generosity**: after early defeating the King of Denmark, Peter the Great of Russia, and the Poles, Charles waged a second war against Peter, which he lost; a defeat that marked the decline of Sweden and the rise of Russia as a great power; Voltaire wrote his *History*. **the murderer of** *Charles Stuart* Oliver Cromwell, who played the leading role in the trial and execution of Charles I, King of England and of Scotland 1625–1649.
[25] **The knight** ***Bayard***, Pierre du Terrail (1473–1525), renowned French soldier known as "fearless and blameless" (*sans peur et sans reproche*). Louis Dominique Bourguignon, *alias* **Cartouche** (1693–1721), notorious highwayman; in the *Observations* [53] Rousseau compares him favorably with Cromwell. **valiant and unfortunate People that has for so long filled Europe with the clamor of your exploits and your miseries** The Corsicans; see Editorial Note to [22] above.
[26] **I have attacked a dangerous and too widely held opinion** namely, that the defining feature of heroism is courage, or that courage is the – Baconian – form of heroism; **I have not the same reasons for following the method of exclusions in all of its details** Regarding this method, see Francis Bacon, *Novum Organum*, The Second Book of Aphorisms, especially nos. xvi–xix. While he does not follow it in all of its details, it is the method Rousseau continues to follow in this *Discourse*. ***Epictetus***, Stoic philosopher (first century), was a slave; see Editorial Note to [38] below. This comparison between *Caesar* and Epictetus parallels, and amplifies, the comparison between Alexander and Diogenes with which this *Discourse* begins.
[29] ***Alexander***, **whom this frightful vice** namely, intemperance, **covered with his friend's blood** Alexander's step-brother and friend, Kleitos, had saved his life at the battle of Granicus, 334 BC. At a banquet, in 328, Kleitos taunted Alexander for assuming Persian dress and

ways. Alexander, intoxicated with drink, killed Kleitos; and immediately regretted his action. *Caesar*['s] . . . **profligacies** are detailed two paragraphs below.

[30] **Montaigne**: quoting *Essays* I, 24 (*OC* 128 near the end; Frame, translating very freely, pp. 94f.); this is also the essay in which Montaigne tells the episode about Augustus and Cinna mentioned earlier in this *Discourse* ([21]); *OC* incorrectly refers to *Essays* I, 23, followed, as usual, by the Intégrale (Launay) edition.

[31] **Alexander . . . was chaste; but was he sober?** On the distinction between temperance, moderation and sobriety, see also *Dialogues*, *OC* I, 807. **Did not this rival of India's first conqueror** Darius, King of Persia (522–485 BC), pushed his conquests in India as far as the Kabul and Indus rivers: Herodotus, *Histories* IV, 44; **imitate his profligacies? did he not combine them, when at the prompting of a Courtesan he burned down the Palace at Persepolis?** In 331 BC, during a revel, Alexander, prompted by Thaïs, set fire to the palace of Persepolis; he immediately regretted his action. **O, had he but had a Mistress!** i.e. had he but not been chaste, **He would not have killed his friend during his fatal debauchery.** On Alexander and Kleitos, see Editorial Note to [29] above. **Caesar . . . exposed Rome to unheard of prostitution and changed sex at pleasure?** Suetonius ends his long account of Caesar's sexual conduct by quoting a contemporary remark that Caesar was every woman's man and every man's woman: *Lives of the Caesars*, Julius Caesar, 45–52. **Alcibiades** (450–404 BC) **had every sort of intemperance and was nonetheless one of the great men of Greece** As all the accounts of him emphasize: Plato, *Symposium* 212d–222d and *Alcibiades* I, cp. *Republic* VI, 494a–495b; Thucydides, *Peloponnesian Wars*, V–VIII; Xenophon, *Hellenica* I; Plutarch, *Alcibiades*. **Even the elder Cato** (234–149 BC) **loved money and wine. He had abject vices**: ". . . to sell slaves in that sort, or to turn them out of doors when you have had the service of their youth, and that they are grown old, as you would use brute beasts that have served whilst they may for age: me thinks that must needs proceed of too severe and greedy nature, that hath no longer regard or consideration of humanity, than whilst one is able to do another good": Plutarch, *Marcus Cato* V (translated by North).

[32] ***Caesar, Alexander, Pyrrhus, Hannibal*** Hannibal is the only one in this list whom Rousseau had not mentioned before in this *Discourse*; Machiavelli speaks of his "inhuman cruelty": *Prince* XVII (edited by Quentin Skinner and Russell Price [Cambridge Texts in the History of Political Thought, Cambridge, 1989], p. 60).

[33] **strength of soul or fortitude** *Force d'âme*, literally translated, gives "strength of soul," an expression which fails to evoke the immedi-

ate echo of *force*; "fortitude" does evoke it, but loses the direct reference to the soul, in a text in which Rousseau is very explicitly discussing various kinds or qualities of souls: greatness of soul, pettiness of soul . . . I shall therefore render *force d'âme*, here and in the few other places where the expression occurs, as "strength of soul or fortitude"; and when Rousseau abbreviates *force d'âme* to *force*, as he does in the immediate sequel, I shall translate it as "fortitude." Rousseau had initially defined all virtue as "the strength and vigor of the soul": *First Discourse* [11] with the Editorial Note *ad loc.*; on *force*, see also A Note on the Translations, p. xlvi above.

[38] **the other virtues, says *Bacon*, deliver us from the dominion of the vices; only fortitude secures us against the dominion of fortune.** In a discussion of competing views of human good, a discussion of which there are numerous echoes throughout this *Discourse*, Bacon comments on the conversation between Socrates and "a Sophist," namely Callicles, ". . . the sophist saying that Socrates' felicity was the felicity of a block or stone; and Socrates saying that the sophist's felicity was the felicity of one that had the itch, who did nothing but itch and scratch. And both these opinions do not want their supports. For the opinion of Socrates is much upheld by the general consent even of the Epicureans themselves, that virtue beareth a great part in felicity; and if so, certain it is that *virtue has more use in clearing perturbations than in compassing desires*. The sophist's opinion is much favored by the assertion . . . that good of advancement is greater than good of simple preservation . . .": *Advancement of Learning* II (*The Works*, edited by Spedding, Ellis and Heath, pp. 321f., referring to Plato, *Gorgias*, 492e 5, 494a 8, 494c 4–495a 4). Rousseau had opened this *Discourse* with a quote from Bacon's *Advancement of Learning*, a work he clearly had present to mind throughout the writing of the *First Discourse* a year or so earlier. However, the *OC* editor of this *Discourse*, Ch. Guyot, thinks that Rousseau is here referring to Bacon, *Essays* V, and Rousseau's comments about the role of fortune and of adversity in the immediate sequel lend some plausibility to this suggestion.

Regulus's martyrdom in Carthage: M. Atilius Regulus was taken prisoner by the Carthaginians in 255 BC; in 250 the Carthaginians decided to sue for peace or at the least for an exchange of prisoners, and they sent Regulus along with their ambassadors to Rome in the expectation that he would support a proposal that would release him from captivity; instead, he persuaded the Senate to reject their proposal and, in spite of his family's and friends' entreaties, returned to Carthage where he was put to death in the most cruel manner; the Younger **Cato's feast upon being denied the Consulship** in 51 BC when he

refused to bribe in order to obtain the post (Plutarch, *Life of Cato Utican* XLIX.2–L.1); **Epictetus's equanimity upon being crippled by his master** Once, when his master put his leg to the torture, Epictetus, smiling, said, "You will surely break my leg"; and when his master did so, he calmly went on to say, "Did I not tell you that you would break it?": Origen, *Contra Celsum* VII, 53. **if Socrates had died in his bed, one might now wonder whether he was anything more than a skillful Sophist** cp. *Pol. Ec.* [30], and *Letter to Franquières* [25].